

IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU BE DARK, OH WHAT A DARKNESS!

Samuel DuBois Cook

GOD'S MINUTE

I HAVE ONLY JUST A MINUTE.
ONLY SIXTY SECONDS IN IT,
FORCED UPON ME--CAN'T REFUSE IT
DIDN'T SEEK IT, DIDN'T CHOOSE IT,
BUT IT'S UP TO ME TO USE IT.
I MUST SUFFER IF I LOSE IT,
GIVE ACCOUNT IF I ABUSE IT.
JUST A TINY LITTLE MINUTE--
BUT ETERNITY IS IN IT.

-ANONYMOUS

PRESIDENT GEE, FACULTY, STAFF, ALUMNI, TRUSTEES, AND, ABOVE ALL, MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS, WHICH, I AM SURE, IS ONE OF THE GREATEST IN THE DISTINGUISHED HISTORY OF THIS PEERLESS INSTITUTION, AND OTHER LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I AM HONORED AND DELIGHTED TO SHARE WITH YOU THIS BEAUTIFUL, HISTORIC, AND SYMBOLIC OCCASION.

TO BEGIN WITH, I WANT TO CONGRATULATE THE GRADUATES, ALONG WITH THEIR PARENTS, OTHER RELATIVES, AND KEY FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS, ON THIS GLORIOUS OCCASION AND UNIQUE MILESTONE IN YOUR LIVES AND IN YOUR CAREERS. WITH DEGREES FROM ONE OF THE NATION'S GREATEST UNIVERSITIES, YOU SHOULD BE "READY TO ROLL."

I ALSO WANT TO EXTEND SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS AND GRATITUDE TO PRESIDENT GEE ON HIS OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP OF, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO, NOT ONLY OUR BELOVED OHIO STATE BUT ALSO TO THE COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE, THE STATE, AND THE COUNTRY IN HIGHER EDUCATION. WE ARE ALL DEEPLY IN HIS DEBT FOR HIS DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP, CONTRIBUTIONS, COMMITMENTS, AND IDEALS.

OHIO STATE, WITH ITS IMPERISHABLE LEGACY, VISION, AND LOFTY IDEALS, IS DEAR TO MY HEART. I SHALL ALWAYS BE A PROUD, LOYAL, AND ENTHUSIASTIC BUCKEYE. GO BUCKEYES!

THIS MAY SOUND CORNY, IF SO, SO BE IT.

I UNABASHEDLY LOVE OHIO STATE AND OWE IT AN INFINITE DEBT OF GRATITUDE FOR WHAT IT DID FOR ME AS A STUDENT DURING MY FORMATIVE YEARS. OHIO STATE HAS CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO THE MEANING, VITALITY, VALUES, PRIORITIES, AND DIRECTION OF MY LIFE AND THE QUALITY OF MY JOURNEY. OSU, BLESS HER NAME, HERITAGE, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

MY SUBJECT IS: "IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU BE DARK, OH WHAT A DARKNESS."

YOU ARE PRIMARILY YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN OF HISTORY AND DESTINY WHO MUST NEGOTIATE THE TREACHEROUS SLOPES OF YOUR FUTURE, YOUR CAREERS, YOUR "BEING AND BECOMING," WHAT YOU ARE

AND WHAT YOU ASPIRE TO BE. WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, WHETHER YOU DESIRE IT OR NOT, MY YOUNG BROTHERS AND SISTERS, YOUR LIVES ARE GOING TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANT AND LASTING QUALITATIVE IMPACT ON OTHER LIVES AND ON SOCIETY IN GENERAL. THE CURRENTS OF YOUR PRECIOUS LIVES WILL TOUCH AND FLOW INTO THE CURRENTS AND RIVERS OF OTHER LIVES--ALL THE ~~COUNTLESS~~ LIVES YOU TOUCH. ^{SO} AND IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU BE DARK. OH WHAT A DARKNESS. YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY, INEVITABLY, AND INESCAPABLY BE ROLE MODELS FOR OTHERS. THE CRITICAL ISSUE IS WHAT KIND OF ROLE MODELS WILL YOU BE? BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE, CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY, VOLUNTARILY OR INVOLUNTARILY, YOU WILL IMPACT OTHER LIVES. WHERE YOU LEAD, OTHERS WILL FOLLOW. OTHERS WILL PATTERN THEIR LIVES, CHOICES, ACTIONS, REACTIONS, ASPIRATIONS, HOPES, AIMS, AND BEHAVIOR AFTER YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU, MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATING CLASS, GOING TO DO WITH THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU? IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU BE DARK, OH WHAT A DARKNESS.

AS THE RODNEY KING TRAGEDY AND ALL ITS AWESOME AND TERRIBLE AFTERMATH AND CONSEQUENCES DEMONSTRATE, THERE IS AN URGENT AND ~~DESPERATE~~ NEED FOR RACIAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY, TOLERANCE, UNDERSTANDING, GOOD WILL, HARMONY, SENSITIVITY, AND

RECONCILIATION IN THIS NATION, IN THE WEST, IN THE EAST, IN THE NORTH, IN THE SOUTH, IN THE MIDWEST, IN LOUISIANA, IN OHIO, IN NEW ORLEANS, AND IN COLUMBUS. INCREASING RACIAL POLARIZATION AND ALIENATION ARE RAMPANT THROUGHOUT OUR BELOVED AND GREAT COUNTRY. RACIAL HEALING IS A MORAL IMPERATIVE AND HUMANISTIC NECESSITY.

EVEN SOME OF OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, WHICH SHOULD BE HALLMARKS OF TOLERANCE, REASON, CIVILITY, AND UNDERSTANDING HAVE BEEN AND ARE CENTERS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC TENSION, INTOLERANCE, CONFLICT, HOSTILITY, AND POLARIZATION.

30 WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE LIGHT--THE UNIQUE, THE SPECIAL, THE DIVINE, THE BLESSED, THE INEXTINGUISHABLE, THE INEXHAUSTIBLE, THE IMPERISHABLE LIGHT WITHIN YOU? HOW SHALL YOU USE IT? WILL YOU USE THE PRECIOUS LIGHT WITHIN YOU CREATIVELY OR DESTRUCTIVELY? WILL YOU USE IT TO ADD TO THE TEARS, SORROWS, TRAGEDIES, WOES, AND HEARTACHES OF HUMAN LIFE OR WILL YOU USE IT TO WIPE AWAY TEARS, ENRICH AND UPLIFT HUMANKIND AND BRING JOY AND RICHNESS OF MEANING TO THOSE WHOSE LIVES YOU TOUCH? WILL YOU SQUANDER AND PERVERT THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU OR WILL YOU CULTIVATE IT WITH A SENSE OF DIVINE MISSION AND URGENCY? WILL YOU USE IT TO GENERATE HOPE OR TO FOSTER DESPAIR? WILL YOU USE IT TO

HELP OR TO HURT THE CAUSE OF HUMAN DECENCY? IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU BE DARK, OH WHAT A DARKNESS!

BY THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU I MEAN THE POWER, INFLUENCE, GENIUS, AND POTENTIAL, THE INTRINSIC AUTHORITY, THE INEXHAUSTIBLE SPIRIT WITHIN EACH OF US. REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE INTERNAL EMPIRE OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. I MEAN THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITHIN EACH ~~AND ALL~~ ^{and all of us} OF US. EACH OF US IS A CENTER AND AGENT OF POWER, INFLUENCE, AND AUTHORITY AS WELL AS MEANING AND VALUE. THERE IS AWESOME POWER WITHIN EACH OF US—POWER FOR CREATIVITY OR DESTRUCTION, GOOD OR EVIL, DIGNITY OR MISERY, THE HIGH ROAD OR THE LOW ROAD, ~~LIGHT OR DARKNESS.~~

^{whereby he} INVOLVED IS MAN'S "RADICAL FREEDOM" WITH ITS CONSEQUENT ^{can use his power for} COMPLEXITY AND AMBIGUITY ~~MAKING~~ FOR GOOD AND EVIL, CREATIVITY AND DESTRUCTION, ~~RIGHT AND WRONG, JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE,~~ PROGRESS AND RETROGRESSION ALL ROOTED IN THE SAME SOURCE. THUS WE CAN USE OUR FREEDOM, POWER, VITALITIES, ENERGY, AND CAPACITIES FOR OPPOSING VALUES, GOALS, MEANS AND ENDS. WHAT A PARADOX! YOU CAN WALK THE HIGH ROAD OR THE LOW ROAD OF LIFE.

WE THANK GOD ALMIGHTY FOR THE LIGHT WITHIN US.

I WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW MUCH LIGHT THERE IS IN THE STARRY SKIES OR IN THE GLORIOUS HEAVENS. WHAT

REALLY MATTERS IS THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU, WITHIN ME. THE MOST PRECIOUS LIGHT IN THE WORLD IS THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU, WITHIN ME. IF THIS PRECIOUS LIGHT BE DARK, OH WHAT AN AWESOME, FRIGHTENING, TERRIBLE, SHATTERING, BLINDING, AND HORRIFYING DARKNESS.

MOREOVER, YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, THE UNIVERSE, OR COSMOS. YOU HAVE NO CONTROL OVER SUCH LIGHT ANYWAY. BUT YOU ARE SUPREMELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU. THE GOD-GIVEN LIGHT WITHIN YOU IS OF SUPREME AND ULTIMATE SIGNIFICANCE. IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE NOT ONLY IN YOUR OWN LIFE AND DESTINY BUT ALSO IN THE LIFE AND DESTINY OF THE WORLD. THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU HAS FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES FOR THE WHOLE OF HUMAN LIFE AND FOR THE MORAL ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE. SO IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU BE DARK, OH WHAT A DARKNESS!

IF YOU HAVE NO DEEP AND ABIDING COMMITMENT TO YOUR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO MAKE THIS WORLD BETTER FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN, REGARDLESS OF RACE, CREED, COLOR, GENDER, ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY, CULTURE, SOCIO-ECONOMIC *status or* *predicament* CONDITION OR EDUCATIONAL STATUS, THEN THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU IS DARK. AND IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU IS DARK, OH WHAT A DARKNESS.

THE WORLD DESPERATELY NEEDS YOUR VISION, EDUCATION, SKILLS, INTEGRITY, COMPASSION FOR HUMAN SUFFERING, MORAL COURAGE, ETHICAL COMMITMENTS, SENSITIVITY, HUMANISM, ALTRUISM, IDEALISM, HONOR, DECENCY; AND RADICAL CONCERN FOR THE WEAK, THE POWERLESS, THE UNEMPLOYED, THE POOR, THE BROKEN, THE VOICELESS, THE OPPRESSED, THE HOMELESS, THE DOWNTRODDEN, THE "WRETCHED OF THE EARTH," THE LEAST OF THESE, OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

YOU MUST BE COMMITTED TO THE BELOVED COMMUNITY OF ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN--WHITE AND BLACK, JEW AND GENTILE, PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC, RICH AND POOR, NORTHERNER AND SOUTHERNER, MALE AND FEMALE, INNER CITY AND SUBURBIA, ORIENTAL AND OCCIDENTAL, LATINO AND ANGLO, LEARNED AND UNTUTORED, INSIDER AND OUTSIDER--NOT ^{of God's children} SOME, NOT MOST, NOT NEARLY ^{6c} ALL, BUT ALL, ALL, ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN. WITH A GREAT SENSE OF URGENCY, COMMIT YOUR LIVES TO THE NOBILITY OF THE IMPERISHABLE IDEALS OF HUMANISM, IDEALISM, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM.

^{order} YOU HAVE SO MUCH TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENRICHMENT AND BETTERMENT OF SOCIETY AND THE WORLD. TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, MUCH IS REQUIRED.

who was so precious to me
MY GREAT COLLEGE CLASSMATE AND LIFELONG FRIEND, MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., WAS PROFOUNDLY RIGHT WHEN HE SAID: "EVERY MAN MUST DECIDE WHETHER HE WILL WALK IN THE LIGHT OF CREATIVE ALTRUISM OR THE DARKNESS OF DESTRUCTIVE SELFISHNESS. THIS IS THE JUDGMENT. *said MLK* LIFE'S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?"¹

YOU MUST BE OUTRAGED BY RACISM, ANTI-SEMITISM, OPPRESSION, SEXISM, POVERTY, MINDLESS VIOLENCE, INTOLERANCE, HOMOPHOBIA, *you* DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE HANDICAPPED AND THE DISABLED, AND *must be outraged by* OTHER FORMS OF BIGOTRY, BARBARISM, INCIVILITY, AND HUMAN INJUSTICE AND DEHUMANIZATION. BUT YOUR MORAL OUTRAGE AND HUMANISTIC ANGER MUST FIND EXPRESSION IN MORAL MEANS TO MORAL ENDS, IN CONSTRUCTIVE CHANNELS, IN REASON, GOOD WILL, RESPECT, LOVE, THE RULE OF LAW, AND CREATIVE NON-VIOLENT METHODS OF INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND SOCIAL CHANGE.

FINALLY, IF YOUR LIFE IS NOT GOVERNED BY HIGH IDEALS, LOFTY AIMS, AND NOBLE GOALS OF STRIVING, IF YOU DO NOT ALWAYS AIM HIGH, IF YOU DO NOT *always* KEEP LOOKING UP, KEEP CLIMBING, KEEP ASPIRING, KEEP DREAMING, KEEP ACHIEVING, KEEP CREATIVELY RESTLESS, KEEP SOARING,

¹The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr., selected and introduced by Coretta Scott King, p. 17.

KEEP CHASING THE UNATTAINABLE IDEAL, KEEP DREAMING THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM, KEEP REACHING FOR THE STARS, KEEP STANDING FOR SOMETHING NOBLE AND HIGH, THEN THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU IS DARK ^{and decent} AND IF THAT LIGHT WITHIN YOU ^{is} DARK, OH WHAT A DARKNESS.

DR. BENJAMIN E. MAYS SPOKE FOR THE ETERNAL, THE MORAL ORDER, THE CREATIVE PROCESS, THE INWARD JOURNEY OF THE SOUL, AND ^{when he said} THE GROUND, NATURE, AND END OF HUMAN EXISTENCE WHEN HE SAID:

^{cc} "IT MUST BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THE TRAGEDY IN LIFE DOESN'T LIE IN NOT REACHING YOUR GOAL. THE TRAGEDY LIES IN HAVING NO GOAL TO REACH. IT ISN'T A CALAMITY TO DIE WITH DREAMS UNFULFILLED, BUT IT IS A CALAMITY NOT TO DREAM. IT IS NOT A DISASTER TO BE UNABLE TO CAPTURE YOUR IDEAL, BUT IT IS A DISASTER TO HAVE NO IDEAL TO CAPTURE. IT IS NOT A DISGRACE NOT TO REACH THE STARS, BUT IT IS A DISGRACE TO HAVE NO STARS TO REACH FOR. NOT FAILURE, BUT LOW AIM IS SIN."²

SDC:gas

²Disturbed About Man, p. 120.